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My name is Jean Palin. I am an Advanced Practice RN (APRN) at a School Based Health Center in New Britain High School. I have worked for Community Health Center, Inc. as an APRN since May, 1999 and I have been with the SBHC since April, 2001.

New Britain High is a large ethnically & economically diverse school with over 3000 students. Often students arrive at the beginning of the school year from out of state, out of town, and from many foreign countries. Many students do not have health insurance, other do have insurance but do not have a primary care provider. Our clinic provides school physicals, vaccinations, PPD's for tuberculosis screening and episodic health care.

Initially, at the start of the school year I provide many school physicals and vaccines. Most of the students & their parents or guardians are coming to the SBHC for these services because they lack health insurance and cannot afford the cost of a physical through a private provider or they can not get an appointment with a provider prior to the start of school.

From 8/15/06 through 10/31/06 I preformed 96 school physicals and administered countless vaccines & PPD's. Of the 96 physicals 62 did not have health insurance, 9 had private medical insurance but no provider and the remaining had Husky insurance.

By providing physicals on demand these students were able to start school almost immediately. I also address any chronic or episodic disease problem at the time of the physical. Appropriate follow up is provided. Families are referred for assistance in applying for Husky and in finding a primary care provider.

Our SBHC works closely with the school nurses, guidance department, school social workers, and teachers. They often refer students with acute and chronic health problems, such as sore throats, colds, earaches, coughs, sport injuries and asthma, as well as for physicals, PPDs and vaccines. We are able to examine the student onsite, make an assessment and treat the illness. Often we can avoid sending the student home and thus improve school attendance.

Many students in the high school are on their own at a young age. They come seeking help with basic health care needs. Recently, I had one student, age 16 who had left home in Massachusetts to live with her sister here in CT. Her mother is a drug addict and has been unreliable for most of her life. Her father's whereabouts are unknown and she hasn't seen him since she was a very young child. She and her sister were soon homeless living in a shelter in New Britain. I was able to help her with her school physical, up date her vaccines, treat her Strep throat & provide a safe haven. I also referred her to our school based social worker for counseling and to our dental hygienist for dental care. With a chaotic home living situation many of these needs would have gone unmet. Since these services are provided in the school it enabled her to continue with her education.

She is just one example of what a SBHC is able to accomplish. Many adolescents have busy and often chaotic family lives. Keeping appointments is not a priority and often is neglected. Continued funding of SBHC's is of the highest importance. We strongly urge the State Legislation to maintain or increase funding. Expansion to other schools can only improve the health of students and may help some students stay in school rather than drop out.